

Despair is all they feel

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Ghatbari, Pukurtola villages of Jalalpur union are most affected," Shah Md Shamsuzzoha, Shahzadpur upazila nirbahi officer, told The Daily Star.

The water development board (WDB) has already started putting geobags at the affected areas to protect them against river erosion, the UNO said.

"We have already directed the union parishad chairmen of the erosion-hit areas to make a list of the victims," The UNO added.

When visiting Pachil area, this correspondent found the river bank

eroding even as the WDB workers were placing the geobags.

"The river bank has been eroding rapidly over the week at Pachil area, devouring at least 20 homesteads. We have shifted our house a little away from the river bank. If erosion continues like this, we will not be able to save any of our belongings," Md Shajahan Miah, an elderly resident of Pachil village, told The Daily Star.

The Shahzadpur UNO however said the WDB has taken up a mega project of over Tk 600 crore to construct permanent structures to protect river banks in the upazila.

Errant hajj agencies to face

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the proposed law, no one will be able to deal with any haji [hajj pilgrim]. And the registration authorities can take action against irregularities."

According to the bill, the registration of any hajj and umrah agency can be cancelled over anomalies.

Also, a hajj agency can be slapped with a fine of maximum Tk 50 lakh, while an umrah agency with Tk 15 lakh for irregularities, it said.

"If any agency gets a warning for two years in a row, its registration will automatically be suspended for the same period. Also, lawsuits can be filed against criminal offences committed in the hajj and umrah management," according to the proposed bill.

The religious affairs ministry placed the bill before the cabinet following its directives issued in 2012 to enact a law instead of the existing policy, the state minister said.

After the enactment of the new

law, if a Bangladeshi gets involved in hajj-related irregularity even in Saudi Arabia, it can be treated as if it had happened in Bangladesh and legal steps, including criminal and administrative actions, can be taken, the bill explained.

Jatiya Party MPs Pir Fazlur Rahman, Shameem Haider Patwary, Raushan Ara Mannan, and BNP MPs Harunur Rashid, Rumeen Farhana, Mosharrif Hossain, and independent MP Rezaul Karim Bablu demanded sending the bill to the committee of eliciting public opinion.

The demand, however, was rejected by voice votes.

Md Faridul said, "A section of hajj agencies used to defraud hajis every year. They would make promises of providing good accommodation facilities and quality food to the aspiring hajis. The hajis, however, alleged that every year many of the agencies did not keep their promises."

Govt okays its emergency

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available in the country, the official, however, said, "The timeline cannot be said right now. Discussion with the respective producer is in progress."

The EUA was issued as per the recommendation of the committee for the evaluation of drug, investigational drug, vaccine, and medical device in case of a public health emergency, said the press release signed by Maj Gen Mahbubur Rahman, director general of DGDA.

Earlier, the DGDA approved five double-dose Covid-19 vaccines for emergency use in Bangladesh.

The other approved vaccines are Covishield produced by Serum Institute of India, Sputnik V produced by Genierum Joint Stock Company of Russia, Sinopharm produced by Beijing Institute of Biological Products Co. Ltd of China, Pfizer vaccine manufactured by Pfizer Manufacturing Belgium NV, and Coronavac produced by Sinovac Life Sciences Ltd of China.

The Janssen vaccine is indicated for active immunization to prevent Covid-19 caused by SARS-CoV-2, in individuals 18 years of age and older.

Earlier, the World Health Organization, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the Food and Drug Administration of the United States of America and Health Canada also approved this vaccine

for emergency use.

Due to the halt in vaccine supply from the Serum Institute of India, the countrywide first dose Covid-19 vaccine inoculation was halted from April 26, which started on February 7 with a target of vaccinating all citizens aged 18 and above in phases.

But the authorities halted administering the first dose of vaccine on April 26 due to the shortage of jabs. More than a week later, the administration of the second dose was also suspended at all the centres across the country.

The inoculation campaign stumbled after Serum Institute of India failed to provide the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine amid a surge in virus deaths and cases in that country.

As per an agreement, Bangladesh was supposed to receive three crore shots of the vaccine from Serum in six months.

Serum delivered 50 lakh doses in the first consignment in January, but shipped only 20 lakh shots the following month. The country has not received any shipment from the company since then.

Now the authorities said the vaccination campaign will be resumed from Saturday -- with the vaccines from Sinopharm from the Chinese government and the Pfizer from the Covax arrangement.

HC orders judicial

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the nature of the land should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries at the ministries of land and home affairs, deputy commissioner, additional deputy commissioner concerned, superintendent of Cox's Bazar police, executive magistrate, upazila nirbahi officer and assistant commissioner (land) of Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila, officer-in-charge of Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station, department of environment of Cox's Bazar district office and its assistant director concerned have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by leading rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) seeking necessary orders on this issue.

Lawyers Syeda Nasrin and Md Shahinuzzaman appeared for the writ petitioner during the virtual hearing on the petition.

The ASK submitted the petition as a public interest litigation to the HC in March this year seeking its directives on the authorities to recover 60 acres of agricultural land at Muhuripara from the land grabbers and hand over the land to the owners in its original nature and character.

In the petition, the ASK said the respondents have failed to dispose of their duties as the public authorities to protect the rights and interest of the poor farmers by allowing the land grabbers to grab the land, thereby allowing them to convert the nature of the land.

Therefore, the HC may kindly direct the respondents to recover the land and hand it over to the original owners, the petitioner said.

The rights body said the illegal act of land grabbing and converting the agricultural land into a housing project has been carried out before the eyes of the respondents by using force, but the respondents are remaining silent, in other way supporting the land grabbers, which is not only disgraceful but also painful to endure.

Scientists discover

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the opposite side, under Brazil. The faster the cooling, the faster that iron crystallisation occurs -- and the faster the growth increases.

Such a disparity has significant implications for the Earth's magnetic field, and the convection currents in the core that generate the field are what protects us from dangerous solar particles.

While the core is solid iron, it is surrounded by a fluid outer core and then a mantle of hot rock. In the mantle and the outer core, heat from the crystallising iron and hotter rock in the mantle moves upwards towards the surface, pushing colder material down. This movement is what generates the magnetic field.

"We provide rather loose bounds on the age of the inner core -- between half a billion and 1.5 billion years -- that can be of help in the debate about how the magnetic field was generated prior to the existence of the solid inner core," said Barbara Romanowicz, UC Berkeley Professor of the Graduate School in the Department of Earth and Planetary Science and emeritus director of the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory (BSL).

New poor is temporary

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Policy Dialogue in April, while another survey around the same time by the Power and Participation Research Centre and the Brac Institute of Governance and Development showed that 2.45 crore fell into poverty even before the second wave of the pandemic hit.

Kamal however does not buy these estimates.

"Those numbers are imaginary. We are looking for the new poor -- we have to find them. Poor is poor -- we have to find a solution for them. Why should we separate new from old poor?"

Which is why, he, in fact, has shrunk the allocations for social safety net schemes.

"It's temporary. I don't think we need to do anything. Those who lost jobs for the lockdown, should get them back now. The small businesses should be open by now."

Social safety net schemes got Tk 107,610 crore in the upcoming fiscal year, which is up 12 percent year-on-year but lower than the average 17.7 percent growth of allocation between fiscals 2009-10 and 2020-21.

And about 30 percent of it is attributed to pension for retired government employees and freedom fighters.

Fiscal 2021-22's safety net allocation is 3.1 percent of GDP, up from 3 percent this year.

Instead, the finance minister has designed a budget putting businesses at the front and centre of it, pinning all hopes on the "multiplier effect" they would generate from the crumbs of tax cuts he threw their way.

In economics, the multiplier effect happens when an injection of new spending (exports, government spending or investment) can lead to a larger increase in final national income (GDP).

This is because a proportion of the injection of new spending will itself be spent, creating income for other firms and individuals. These firms and individuals will also spend a proportion of their income, which itself creates income for others. This process continues until no more extra income is left to be spent.

Kamal is hoping the businesses would kick-start this phenomenon when he could have been the one to do it.

"The businesses start everything -- the multiplier effect will come through their hands."

If the budget is business-friendly, the businesses will be able to "do

business".

"They will bring money to the economy, which is good for the country. They will employ people, they will create jobs, they will make a profit -- and we will get tax, which will be used in the social safety net. Being business-friendly is the most important thing."

But in the absence of any visible improvement in the ease of doing business and the cloud of the pandemic hanging over the economy, one must wonder from where businesses would get the conviction to make the level of investment Kamal is hoping for.

And it is this logic of the multiplier effect that he is drawing on to continue with the provision of legalising black money unquestioned into the new fiscal year.

While there was no mention of this provision in the budget speech and the accompanying documents, Kamal's statements since then suggest he will most definitely slip in the provision when the final budget gets passed in the parliament.

In the first 10 months of this fiscal year, Tk 14,459 crore of undisclosed income was legalised by paying a 10 percent tax, according to the National Board of Revenue.

"There will be a multiplier effect of five. Do you know how much money that is? Tk 70,000 crore. The face of Bangladesh will change -- you will see a turnaround in the next six months."

In the absence of credible data gathering by the government statistical agency, one must wonder how the finance minister can pinpoint the amount of multiplier.

The provision to legalise black money was always there, even during the times of Saifur Rahman and Hussain Muhammad Ershad, he says.

"In 15 years, Tk 14,000 crore was whitened -- and in 10 months, Tk 14,000 crore of black money got amnesty. This shows there is demand. And that, people have faith in this economy."

Economists however vehemently oppose the provision -- as it penalises upright taxpayers -- which is nothing unusual for the finance minister.

In fact, rarely has Kamal, an accountant by training, seen eye to eye with the economists.

"I try to work with everyone -- economists should appreciate me. We both want the same things. Very few countries have logged in positive growth last year -- we were never in the negative. This needs to be praised."

S Korea to give

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procedures, will sign a framework agreement containing detailed conditions and the list of potential projects to be considered.

At the meeting, the Korean embassy and the Bangladesh ERD reviewed a number of other ongoing and new development assistance projects between the two governments, including those under implementation through Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

Bangladesh is a priority development partner of South Korea and the second-largest recipient of Korea's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) loan.

Korea has provided Bangladesh \$1.24 billion in EDCF loans and \$172 million in grants through KOICA since 1991 in various sectors, including public administration, vocational training and education, transport, ICT-based communication, public administration, water management, and public health.

At the meeting, the South Korean embassy introduced Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP), a platform for development cooperation aiming to share knowledge with development partner countries and build a solid foundation for the expansion of economic and political cooperation.

The embassy recommended that the ERD consider ways to improve the efficiency of development cooperation, including facilitation of customs clearance and tax exemption on grant equipment and items in accordance with the framework agreement for grant aid between the two governments.

Officials from the ERD, Korea EXIM Bank Bangladesh, KOICA Bangladesh and Korea Development Institute also took part in the meeting.

Transmission

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transmission rates are low.

On March 17 last year, the government closed all educational institutions to contain the spread of the coronavirus. It led to cancellation of exams and left academic calendars in disarray. The government extended the closure to June 30 this year.

While inaugurating another tree plantation programme at Jazira Mohammadia Alim Madrasa in Keraniganj yesterday, Dipu Moni said according to experts, an atmosphere conducive to schools and colleges will be when the transmission rates come down to five percent or below.

She said the rates would go down when everybody maintained the health safety rules properly. "The situation is worsening as all are not following the safety protocols."

She also said, "We are trying to hold the SSC and the HSC exams, maybe we will need some more days to observe the situation. We will consider some alternatives if we see that it is not possible to reopen educational institutions. We are looking at all possible alternatives."

She said she could not say now whether the examinations would be held or not. "We will need to make a decision regarding the matter soon. It depends on the Covid-19 situation. But whatever the decision will be, it will be for the welfare of the students."

Dipu Moni said they noticed that students were doing well in doing their assignments.

Usually, SSC exams take place in February and HSC in April, but it did not take place this time due to the Covid-19 situation.

The government could hold the SSC exams just before closing all educational institutions on March 17 last year, but it was not possible to hold the HSC exams.

The HSC examinees were promoted based on the previous two public exams last year.

Virus outpacing

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the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, it has to date shipped more than 87 million vaccine doses to 131 countries -- far fewer than anticipated.

70 PERCENT TARGET
The WHO wants at least 70 percent of the world's population vaccinated by the next G7 meeting in Germany next year.

"To do that, we need 11 billion doses. The G7 and G20 can make this happen," said Tedros.

Medical charity Doctors Without Borders questioned how sincere the G7 was in pursuing vaccine equity.

"We need to see more clarity around the actual number of doses donated, and exactly how long it's going to take to translate their pledges into real impact and access," the medical charity's Hu Yuanqiong told AFP.

As well as dose sharing, the G7 anti-pandemic battle plan includes commitments to avert future pandemics -- slashing the time taken to develop and licence vaccines to under 100 days, reinforcing global surveillance and strengthening the WHO.

But observers voiced scepticism at their willingness to follow through on the last point especially.

"I will believe (that) point when the contributions to WHO are increased," tweeted Ilona Kickbusch, founding director and chair of the Global Health Centre in Geneva.

Others stressed the need to quickly resolve the issue of Covid vaccine patent protections, to boost production.

Ask them to file wealth

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all civil and military bureaucrats and business persons, who have beautiful homes and cars, submit their up-to-date wealth statements."

Mujibul said there would be no shortage of money for the budget if the finance minister looked into the matter.

Coming down hard on Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, the lawmaker said the minister asked MPs to give him the names of those who have laundered money abroad.

"Are we in charge of the Ministry of Finance? You will find out the names. In the budget speech, you gave a 10-page statement on the comments of different foreigners about the rosy picture of the country's economy."

Referring to a report by Global Financial Integrity, a Washington-based think tank, Mujibul said Tk 64,000 crore is laundered from Bangladesh every year on average. "You [finance minister] have a lot of agencies. You should find it out."

The former state minister said he saw on Facebook that an MP bought a home in Canada. "The MP's wife is walking around the home in Canada."

'A SUPERMODEL OF CORRUPTION'
Terming the health minister a "supermodel of corruption", BNP

MP GM Siraj yesterday urged the prime minister to overhaul the health ministry to set a precedent of "zero tolerance" against corruption.

The health minister said accusing his ministry of corruption had become fashionable, the BNP MP told parliament.

Siraj said the nation knows that Mithu, Afzal, Azad, Razzak, Sajjad, Humayun, Mamun, Sattar, Shahed, and Malek are "models of corruption."

"And you [health minister] are the supermodel of corruption."

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal lawmaker Hasanul Huq Inu alleged that although the finance minister correctly identified the priority sectors, the budgetary allocations in those were not right.

Talking about lack of good governance in the health sector, the JSD president said everybody knows what is happening in public purchases in all sectors, including healthcare.

He mentioned that there is only corruption news in the health sector and it received a low allocation, but could not utilise the amount properly.

"They just earned bad names over corruption in whatever they have done in the name of purchase. As a result, the country does not get oxygen plants in right time." Inu said.

Indian foreign minister

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most immediately vital form of aid.

The country's usable foreign reserves were believed to have fallen to between \$100 million to \$200 million and were expected to drop to zero by late September, 1971 unless there were new commodity loans.

THANT APPEALS FOR AID
Secretary General U Thant appealed to the world community today for assistance to East Pakistan. He declared that improved conditions in East Pakistan would help to halt the flow of refugees crossing the border into India.

Thant made a separate appeal last month to governments for assistance to the refugees in India, now estimated to total more than six million.

In a related development, the International Rescue Committee disclosed that it would send a group to India with the aim of finding and assisting educators, writers, physicians and other professionals who had fled from East Pakistan.

Charles Sternberg, executive director of the Rescue Committee, who had been conferring with United Nations authorities,

explained that the intention was to assist professionals and intellectuals with emergency funds but not resettlement.


The committee recognised that as a private group it could not possibly attempt an aid programme for the entire refugee population and so decided to concentrate on the professional groups, he said.

BANGLADESH REFUGEE FLOW INCREASES AGAIN
The number of refugees arriving in India daily was increasing after a relative lull, a senior Indian government official said today.

The reduced flow of new arrivals from June 5 to June 12 ended, and the government had indications that huge numbers of Bangladeshis were still traveling towards the Indian border.

Indian government figures showed that an average of more than 100,000 refugees had crossed the border each day since May 7, 1971. There were now almost six million Bangladeshis in India.

Shamsuddoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

ঢাকা মেডিকেল কলেজ

DHAKA MEDICAL COLLEGE

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Ref: DMC/2021/1989 Date: 12.06.2021

Admission Notice

Invitation for application for "Certification Program in Emergency Medicine (CPEM)"

In order to improve standard of emergency services in Bangladesh, Dhaka medical College in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, USA (Upenn) is going to organize 1(one) year long Certification Program in Emergency Medicine (CPEM).

Application from interested doctors are expected.

Prof. Dr Abdul Hanif (Tablu), FAIMER Institute fellow, USA, will be acting as Program Director of this course from Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka, Bangladesh.


Criteria of course:

- Duration 1(one)year.
- Online class on every Thursday evening.
- 5(Five) faculties from University of Pennsylvania will come to Bangladesh for hands on training and teaching and each faculty will stay for 15(Fifteen) days.
- Evaluation examination after completion of course.
- Upenn certificate for successful candidate.

Number of participants: 20(Twenty).

Application Deadline: 24/06/2021.

Contact: Office of Principal, Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka.



Prof. Dr. Md. Titu Miah
Principal
Dhaka Medical College

GD-1214